



# Our Vision for Tulsa

Draft | Fall 2009



PLANiTULSA

OUR PLAN. OUR FUTURE.





Fall, 2009

I am pleased to introduce the **first draft of *Our Vision for Tulsa*, a key milestone in the process, known as PLANiTULSA, to update the City's Comprehensive Plan.** This document presents the long-term aspirations for how Tulsa will look, feel, and function. At this draft stage, it is meant to serve as the beginning of a conversation. **When adopted, it will serve as a guide for setting planning goals, policies and measuring their outcomes.**

**Thousands of fellow Tulsans have helped create this vision for Tulsa's future with energy, enthusiasm and love for this special place we call home.** It is the culmination of two years of hard work and many conversations with Tulsa residents—all of whom wanted to be involved in shaping the future of our community. Tulsans worked with neighbors to take a look at our past, assess the present, and imagine the future.

**There is much to celebrate about Tulsa. We have a history of entrepreneurial spirit, trailblazing innovation, and wonderful communities and neighborhoods.** We value our natural resources, especially the Arkansas River, and our wide open spaces such as Turkey Mountain Urban Wilderness Area. **We also want the best for our children, including world-class school systems, opportunities for advanced education and training, and a strong economy that helps families and all Tulsans. These and other key elements lie at the heart of what we seek to nurture and improve through PLANiTULSA.** I hope this vision for our city resonates with you and your family, coworkers, neighbors and friends.

This draft Vision has been a long time coming, and it arrives at a critical juncture in our city's history. It represents the persistent will and drive to reinvigorate our downtown and economy, to attract and retain young people and to provide them with opportunities to raise their families, and to connect our communities with diverse transportation options. This vision protects our environmental assets and preserves our architectural heritage.

I invite you to take a few minutes to read about Tulsa's proposed future vision, think about the possibilities, and engage your friends and neighbors in a conversation about the future of our great city.

Sincerely,

Kathy Taylor  
Mayor



# PLANiTULSA

## Our Vision for Tulsa

### Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
Guiding Principles .....	4
Our Vision of Tulsa’s Future.....	5
Vision Map.....	10
Areas of Change & Stability .....	12
The Plan Chapters	
Land Use.....	14
Transportation.....	22
Economic Development .....	28
Housing .....	30
Parks .....	32
Open Space .....	33
Sustainability & Built Environment.....	34
How We Will Achieve Our Vision .....	36
Proposed Strategies.....	38
Next Steps & Plan Structure.....	44



Matt Moffett

## Executive Summary

Our Vision for Tulsa lays out concepts for how the City of Tulsa will look, function, and feel over the next 20-30 years. This vision is the guiding document for Tulsa's comprehensive plan update, PLANiTULSA, and describes the kinds of places, economy, housing and transportation choices, parks, and open spaces that the city's policies should be designed to create.

It is a product of unprecedented public engagement, developed with the guidance of thousands of Tulsans, stakeholders, City staff, and a volunteer Citizens' Team. Through this vision, Tulsans are setting our city on a new course.

With help from surveys, workshops, and growth and transportation scenarios, the shared vision for Tulsa's future is emerging. Five key themes have surfaced.

Tulsa should:

- Have a Vibrant & Dynamic Economy
- Attract & Retain Young People
- Provide Effective Transportation
- Provide Housing Choices
- Protect the Environment & Provide Sustainability

*Our Vision for Tulsa* is a major step forward in building a brighter future for the city. The PLANiTULSA team thanks the thousands of Tulsans who helped shape this document, and looks forward to working with you to make our vision a reality.

## The Plan Chapters

### Land Use

Tulsa's land use will be organized under five broad building blocks: downtown, corridors, new centers, new neighborhoods, and existing neighborhoods. New development efforts will focus on creating pedestrian-friendly mixed-use places. Existing neighborhoods will be preserved and, where needed, revitalized.

### Transportation

Tulsans will have a wide variety of transportation choices. The system will be designed to allow everyone a variety of modes to choose from, including driving, biking, or riding frequent and reliable bus or rail transit.

### Economic Development

Economic development efforts will be coordinated to expand opportunity and improve Tulsans' quality of life. Efforts will include focusing on Tulsa's classic strengths, like aerospace, energy, and health care. Equally important, we will support new entrepreneurs who will grow the industries of the future.

### Housing

Tulsa will provide a wide range of housing sizes, prices, and types. Home ownership options will include traditional urban and suburban homes, as well as new housing types like condos and lofts. There will also be increased demand for a variety of apartments located downtown, in new centers and along main streets.

### Parks

Most Tulsans will live within walking or biking distance of a neighborhood park. The PLANiTULSA plan will incorporate the city's Parks Master Plan of 2009.

### Open Space

Tulsa will work to incorporate open spaces—waterways, floodplains and open space—into the city fabric, and continue to be an innovator in storm water management.

### Sustainability and the Built Environment

In the energy-constrained world of the future, Tulsa will be a major leader in creating high quality places for people to live, work, and play by incorporating high efficiency building practices and planning for complete communities that balance homes, jobs, and amenities, both within and at the city's edge.

## Proposed Strategies

1. Revise the city's **zoning code** so that it is easier to use, explicitly allows a diverse range of mixed-use building types, allows innovative automobile parking solutions, and aligns development incentives with overarching planning goals.
2. Create a **redevelopment strategy** that broadens the range of housing options, creates new spaces for different types of employers, and makes efficient use of existing infrastructure. Such a strategy includes collaborative partnerships between the public and private sectors to ensure that vital areas of the city become more sustainable and socially and aesthetically vibrant.
3. Develop a **new transportation strategy** that focuses on mending and improving Tulsa's network connectivity and supporting land use and redevelopment strategies. This strategy includes making better use of advanced transportation modeling and information technologies to guide investments and realigning planning and infrastructure finance practices to fund them.
4. Build upon the tradition of **neighborhood and small area planning** in key areas to jump-start priority projects and initiatives.
5. Cooperate on developing several key PLANiTULSA **innovative building types as demonstration projects**.
6. Organize city planning and development functions to implement the vision. **Enhance coordination of long range planning, zoning administration, current planning, capital planning, community development and economic development functions** to move major projects and initiatives forward.

# Guiding Principles

Capturing these hopes, dreams and aspirations for Tulsa's future is essential as we move forward in making our future vision a reality. The Citizens' Team, a diverse group of volunteers, developed the following guiding principles. These principles serve as the foundation for future planning efforts, and will ensure that the comprehensive plan remains consistent with the vision.

## Economy

- Downtown Tulsa should act as a thriving economic engine and cultural center for the entire region.
- Entrepreneurs, small businesses and large employers should find Tulsa an easy place to do business.
- Adequate space for expanding businesses into downtown, along main streets, or in employment centers should be easy to find.
- The city should invest in the critical infrastructure necessary to develop a robust and diversified economy.
- The city should have the ability to monitor trends, spot key opportunities and meet challenges strategically.

## Transportation

- A variety of transportation options should serve the city, so that all Tulsans can go where we need to go by driving if we want, but also by walking, biking or using public transit.
- Transit should be designed as a consumer good, to attract people without a vehicle, as well as people who do, with its quality and benefits.
- Employment areas also should provide nearby access to services such as child care, groceries and restaurants.

## Community and Housing

- Tulsans want a city where newcomers can move, buy a home and join the community.
- Future development should protect historic buildings, neighborhoods and resources while enhancing urban areas and creating new mixed-use centers.
- Tulsa residents envision a city with pockets of density to provide for a more livable, pedestrian-friendly and cost-efficient community.
- Tulsa should permit opportunities for a full range of housing types to fit every income, household and preference.

## Equity and Opportunity

- Tulsans want a cohesive city where we have the ability to create safe, healthy lives for ourselves and our families.
- Tulsans want civic, business and government institutions to ensure that everyone has equal opportunity and access to housing, employment, transportation, education and health care, regardless of background, ethnicity, or neighborhood.
- Schools should be safe, easy to walk to, and part of a world-class education system.

## Environment

- Tulsans expect our city to become a leader in sustainability and efficiency.
- Residents expect easy access to parks and natural areas.
- City parks should provide open space, available to each neighborhood, with access to fields, natural areas and greenways for outdoor relaxation and recreation.
- New buildings should meet high standards for energy and water efficiency while delivering high quality spaces and architectural design.

## Planning Process

- Tulsans expect city planning and decision-making to be an inclusive and transparent process.
- Once adopted, city-wide and neighborhood plans should be funded, implemented and monitored for performance.
- Development and zoning policies should be easily understood, workable and result in predictable development.
- Residents should have a voice in solving their community's problems today and be a part of planning for tomorrow.



# PLANiTULSA

## Our Vision for Tulsa

*Our Vision for Tulsa* is one piece of the Comprehensive Plan that is being developed for the city through the PLANiTULSA process. The vision lays out the concepts for how a community will grow, how it will adapt to changes, which parts should be preserved, and how it will look and feel in the next several decades.

PLANiTULSA, Tulsa's comprehensive plan update process, has been the work of several thousand people who love and care about our community. Their input has been gathered in public workshops, in stakeholder interviews, and through public surveys.

As a result, this vision document reflects the voice of Tulsans and will serve to guide the next steps—creating a comprehensive plan and implementation strategy.

### THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS AND PARTICIPANTS

While thousands of Tulsans have contributed to PLANiTULSA, a volunteer Citizens' Team has worked closely with City of Tulsa staff, community members, stakeholders, and the consulting team to guide the process. Citizens' Team members have spent many days reviewing analysis and findings, developing the Guiding Principles, shaping the workshop process, providing input on the scenarios, and representing Tulsa's diverse communities. Much of PLANiTULSA's success is owed to these leaders, who will continue to help shape the vision, the plan's policies, and implementation steps.



Citizens' Team members, Mayor Kathy Taylor, and city staff standing on the hundreds of maps created by the public at workshops throughout the city. These maps were vital to the creation of Our Vision.



## PLANiTULSA IS TULSA'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE PROCESS.

To determine what Tulsans want for the city's future, PLANiTULSA gathered public input in workshops, in interviews with key groups, and in surveys. We want:

- A vibrant and dynamic economy
- The ability to attract and retain young people
- An effective transportation system
- A range of housing choices
- Emphasis on preserving the environment and increasing sustainability
- A commitment to transparent, equitable decision-making



Workshop participants discussing their ideas for housing and employment locations and transportation options.



Linda Allen

## What does Tulsa want for its future?

A great city doesn't just happen ... it requires considerable time, discussion, citizen participation, leadership and creativity. There are times in every great city's history that are particularly pivotal, where forward-thinking decisions play a critical role in the city's future success. Now is such a time for Tulsa.

Overall, Tulsans are looking for change—in the form of revitalization, expanded housing choices, a diverse and strong economy, and more choices in how to get around town. But we also want stability in certain key areas, such as in protecting and enhancing our existing neighborhoods. And we want Tulsa to be the kind of city where young people can get a great education, build a career and raise a family. We expect that decisions will be made openly and fairly, and we are committed to maintaining a healthy environment.

# Input for Our Vision

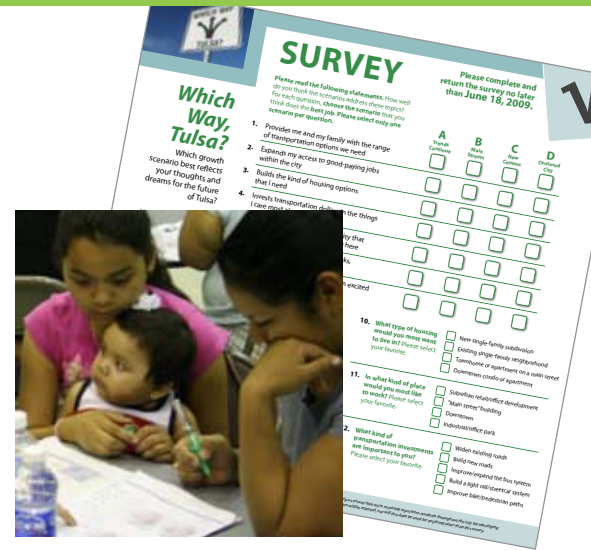
In May and June, Tulsans were asked to give feedback on their favorite aspects of the four growth and transportation scenarios. These were based on public workshop and other forms of input gathered during the PLANiTULSA process. Each scenario showed an alternative future for Tulsa by varying different factors related to economic development, planning, transportation, infrastructure and other policy decisions.

PLANiTULSA received more than 5,500 responses to a city-wide survey that asked Tulsans to give feedback on their favorite aspects of the four scenarios. The purpose of the survey was not to choose a “winner”, but to get a sense of Tulsans’ broad preferences for how the city should look and feel in the future. There was substantial support for Centered City, which envisions restoring downtown as the region’s center of housing and employment. At the same time, New Centers was also popular, with its focus on complete communities of single-family homes in proximity to neighborhood centers with shopping and community amenities. Finally, Tulsans were supportive of Main Streets, and a renewed emphasis on making the city’s corridors more pedestrian-friendly, transit-friendly, and livable.

Strong support for new possibilities—instead of continuing with current trends—indicates a strong desire by Tulsans to change direction. The survey results showed that while Tulsans continue to want a strong downtown and revitalized main streets, we also cherish the communities we already have. Over half of survey respondents would choose to live in an existing neighborhood rather than downtown or along a main street.

The vision is designed to reflect these diverse values and preferences, and accounts for the best aspects of the most popular scenarios: revitalizing downtown, reinvesting in Tulsa’s corridors, preserving existing communities and building new neighborhoods and centers.

Survey results and the original transportation and land use scenarios are available at: [WWW.PLANITULSA.ORG](http://WWW.PLANITULSA.ORG)



## POSSIBLE FUTURES

Four different land-use and transportation scenarios were presented to Tulsans in the spring of 2009. They each represented a different kind of future.

### A. TRENDS CONTINUE

Depicted the continuation of current growth and development trends, placing many new homes outside the city and a diminished role for downtown.

### B. MAIN STREETS

Placed new growth along the city’s existing corridors and downtown, creating a city of more vibrant main streets.

### C. NEW CENTERS

Placed new growth in new complete communities and neighborhoods on vacant land inside the city.

### D. CENTERED CITY

Concentrated growth in and around downtown and along the city’s inner corridors.



Linda Allen



Otie

Arts and entertainment are key to attracting and retaining young people.



Cain's Ballroom is a historic and nationally known performance venue.

## The "New" Tulsa will:

### Have a Vibrant and Dynamic Economy

The city's engine is a robust and dynamic economy that creates wealth, spurs innovation, and grows employment. Tulsans envision a city that creates additional opportunities for an entrepreneur to open a business, makes it easier for an owner to get a building permit, and provides many transportation options for an employee to commute to work. It will be crucial for the city to continue to nurture and support key industries such as energy, aviation, and health care that will continue to attract workers and their families. The city has a history of leadership and innovation; Tulsans are eager to build on that history to become an energy and sustainability powerhouse.

### Attract and Retain Young People

The city's future lies with younger generations, whether they are from Tulsa or other parts of the country or the world. Tulsans envision a city where young people can get an excellent education and training, build a career, have a home, and have plenty of entertainment options. Universities and higher educational institutions attract young people, but it is how well a city welcomes and provides them with a stimulating environment and economic opportunities that determines whether they stay. Tulsa's history as a music and performance mecca is a tremendous asset, and the outdoor amenities also are vital. A creative Tulsa, where young people can get a start, take chances, and contribute to the community is vastly appealing to younger residents.

### Provide Effective Transportation

Tulsans recognize that great cities also need great transportation systems that provide a range of travel choices and make the most of their investments. Tulsa's strategy in the past has been to build primarily for cars. The legacy of this approach is significant capacity for automobile travel, but at the expense of those who are unable to drive, or who would like better options for transit, biking, and walking. Tulsans are ready to make a change, and use some of that capacity to expand options. We are also ready to use modes like frequent bus service, rail transit and streetcars. We also want to expand and make better use of our bike facilities and pedestrian networks to connect our city.

## Provide Housing Choices

Some of Tulsa's greatest assets are its single-family neighborhoods, which have provided affordable homes for most of the city's history. Some neighborhoods have homes that need repair. The city is committed to help support and rebuild them in cooperation with owners and the community. Tulsans also recognize, however, that one size does not fit all, and that condominiums, apartments, town homes, live-work lofts, and mixed-use communities will expand the range of options for current and future residents. Mixed-use communities include homes within walking distance of shops and apartments and condos above storefronts—reminiscent of the way Tulsa's main streets and inner neighborhoods originally developed. Mixed-use communities support walking, biking, and transit, and provide housing choices for young, old, and everyone in between. Downtown Tulsa should have a variety of housing for people who are more interested in a dense urban environment.

## Protect the Environment and Provide Sustainability

Tulsans envision a city that is committed to and leads in sustainability measures. This includes many important elements of a well functioning city: great walking, biking, and transit access as alternatives to driving, high-efficiency building practices, and the smart use of land. In turn, Tulsans recognize our great natural assets, including Mohawk Park, the Arkansas River, Turkey Mountain Urban Wilderness Area, and more than 280 miles of trails. We want to preserve those assets for our children, and where possible, bring nature and parks into the city for everyone to enjoy.



Preservation of Tulsa's single-family neighborhoods is important. Our Vision also recognizes the need for an expanded range of housing options, like apartments and condos.



Recreational assets like the River Parks trail should be preserved, well-maintained and expanded.



## Mapping Tulsa in a New Direction

Part of the process for shaping Tulsa's new direction is to create a map to point the way. Using the guiding principles, workshop, and scenario survey input, PLANiTULSA developed the vision map presented on the next page. It depicts Tulsa's land use and transportation future. Additional maps will be created as the new comprehensive plan is drafted.

## The Tulsa Vision Map

The vision map is an illustration of Tulsa's future, as shaped by PLANiTULSA participants and stakeholders. This map depicts how various key elements—such as future growth, reinvestment along corridors, new centers and neighborhoods, and a revitalized and vibrant downtown—will function.

This map is a **conceptual document**, with no force of law or regulatory function. Instead, it provides ideas, direction and focus for crafting the city's land-use program, the comprehensive plan, and transportation maps, and ultimately the zoning code to implement them.

This map is the starting point for a discussion about developing the comprehensive plan and the policy and implementation steps that will be needed.



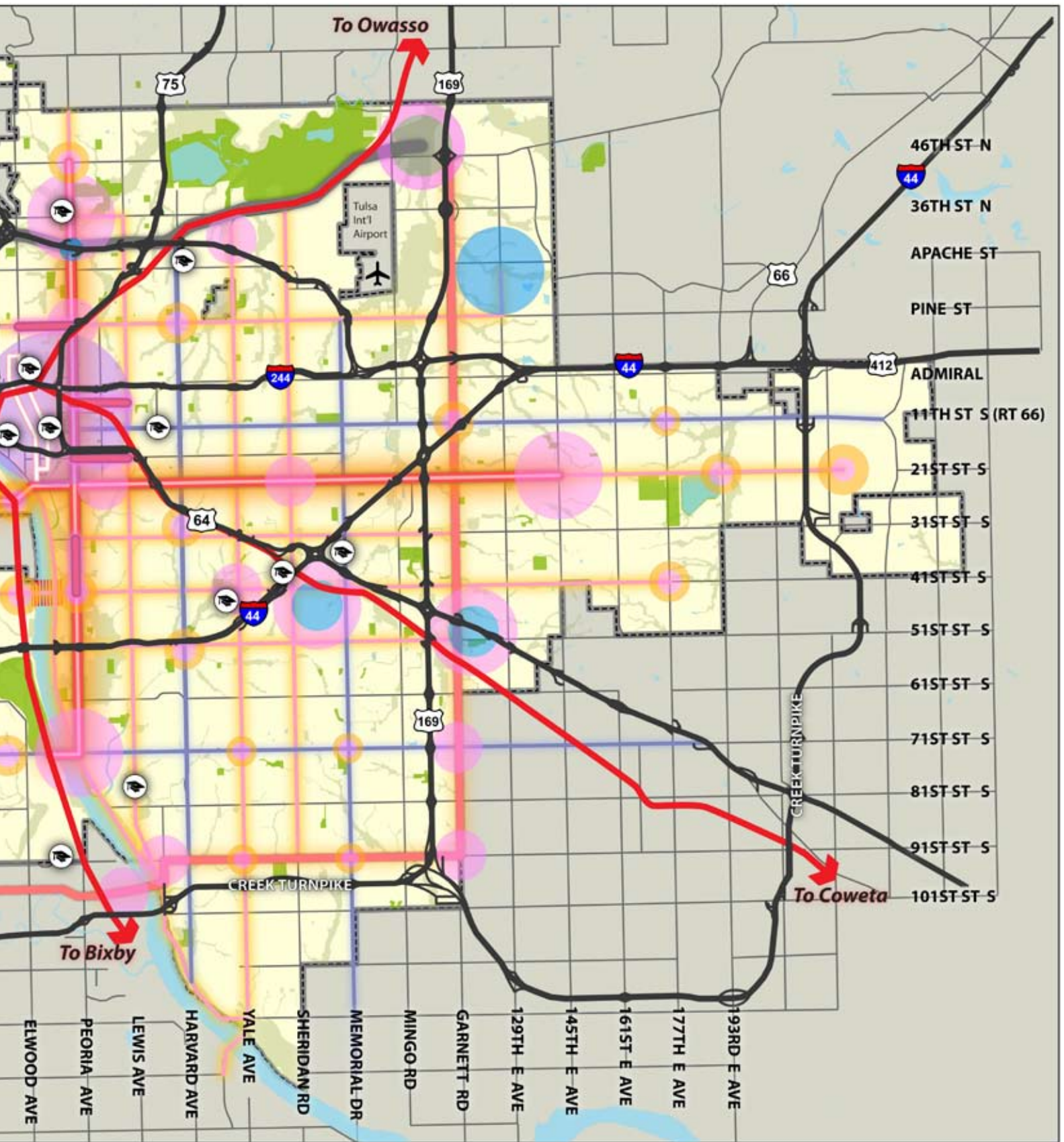
### Vision - Legend

#### LAND USE

- Downtown
- New Center
- Employment-focused Center
- Employment Center
- Neighborhood Center
- Intermodal Hub
- Educational Institutions
- Regional Parks
- Open Space

#### TRANSPORTATION

- Rail Transit
- Streetcar
- Frequent Bus
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Multimodal Corridors
- Main Street
- Commuter Corridor
- Multimodal Bridge
- Freight Corridor
- Existing/Planned Expressways



## KEY CONCEPTS FOR STABILITY AND CHANGE

- Growth should be directed to places that will benefit from an infusion of population, activity and investment (Areas of Change)
- Character preservation, reinvestment and limited growth are the primary concerns for stable residential neighborhoods (Areas of Stability)
- When growth occurs in stable residential areas it should be focused in centers, in activity nodes and near transit routes
- Regulations should encourage development, yet maintain standards for appropriately located density and urban design
- Public infrastructure investments will improve the physical environment of the City and stimulate private investment
- Growth in Areas of Change connects residents to transit, jobs and centers of activity, and increases housing and employment

## Areas of Stability and Change

Tulsans have expressed a desire for change; they also want to preserve and enhance the best aspects of their city. This map is a conceptual illustration of which parts of the city are likely to change and remain the same over the life of the plan. A more detailed and comprehensive map will be developed as part of the Policy Plan document.

The city's primary areas of stability are existing single-family neighborhoods, which are the heart of the Tulsa community. Areas of change are likely to be under-used land along corridors and downtown and undeveloped land. Care must be taken to ensure that reinvestment is well-integrated with existing neighborhoods. Undeveloped land at the edges of the city should be planned for complete communities that balance homes, jobs, and amenities.

### AREAS OF STABILITY



### AREAS OF CHANGE



DRAFT EXAMPLE - for illustration purposes only.



## Our Vision and the New Comprehensive Plan

This vision will serve as the guide for creating and implementing the comprehensive plan and strategic implementation steps. The city's current plan, which functions as a blueprint for the city, was written in 1978. While it has been frequently updated and amended, it is inadequate for the future Tulsans have envisioned.

Each chapter of the new comprehensive plan will cover broad functional aspects of the city:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Parks
- Open Space
- Sustainability and the Built Environment

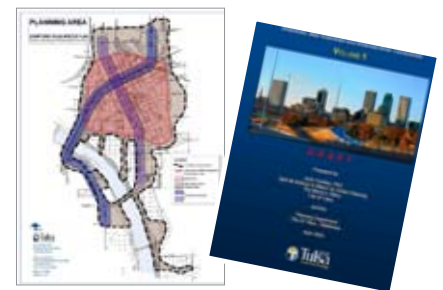
While separated for organizational purposes, each chapter will be linked, to support the policies of others. For example, goals and policies in the transportation chapter will be coordinated with land use, so parcels around a light rail station are zoned for housing, jobs, and amenities.

The following pages outline each chapter of the plan.

Beryl Ford Collection



A view of the Tulsa skyline from 1972. Tulsa has changed dramatically since the 1970's.



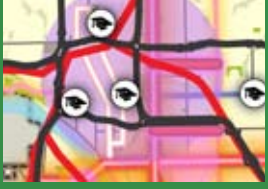
### DOWNTOWN TULSA MASTER PLAN

Detailed planning concepts for downtown Tulsa have been developed on a parallel track with the PLANiTULSA process. The 2009 draft Downtown Tulsa Master Plan serves as a key component of Tulsa's future vision, and will be folded into the PLANiTULSA Comprehensive Plan.

The PLANiTULSA plan will not invalidate existing plans in the City. The plan will guide future efforts and decisions, be they new initiatives or updates, to these existing plans over time.

## LAND USE BUILDING BLOCKS

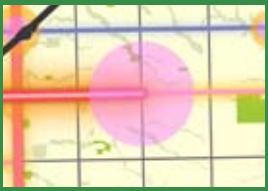
### Downtown



### Corridors



### New Centers



### New Neighborhoods



### Existing Neighborhoods



## Plan Chapter Land Use

Tulsa's future land uses will be broadly organized under five main building blocks:

- Downtown
- Corridors
- New Centers
- New Neighborhoods
- Existing Neighborhoods

Building blocks are a combination of land uses, urban design concepts, and transportation elements that provide a more complete description of city environments than typical zoning-based land use plans.

The building blocks will be the basis of Tulsa's land use categories and are used in the vision to describe the kinds of places Tulsa will feature in the future. They will cover a range of places, from the central business district and Brady Village downtown, to new neighborhoods with grocery stores and other shops in east and west Tulsa.



In keeping with Tulsa's tradition of single-family neighborhoods, new neighborhoods will consist mostly of individual homes.

## Downtown

Downtown Tulsa will be the place to see a concert, go shopping, or have a night out on the town. A lot of people also will work downtown, where plentiful office space and a great transit system will make it easy for employers to serve their clients, attract great talent, and serve residents and visitors.

Adjacent to the central business district, the Brady Village will provide flexible work spaces and loft housing. The University of Tulsa, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa, and Langston University will be connected to downtown via streetcar, making it easy for students to get downtown for internships and on-the-job training. Tulsa Community College Metro Campus downtown will be easily accessible from around the city. The OSU-Langston University village, just north of downtown will thrive as a student housing center, with mixed-use apartments, shops and great night life.

Downtown also will be a popular place to live. Newly developed housing will consist mostly of high density condominiums and apartments, often with pocket parks, fountains and plazas nearby. Some of downtown's buildings, including historic Art Deco structures, will be restored as condominiums. People living downtown will add to the street life and support a robust restaurant scene. Shoppers and visitors from the suburbs will come downtown and spend a day enjoying downtown's parks and fountains, as well as shopping.

It will be easy to get downtown by car or transit. For those who drive, it will be a simple matter to park in one of the many garages and then walk or take the streetcar to various destinations. Commuters from outlying neighborhoods will easily reach downtown via bus, bike, foot, rail or car. Downtown will be the city's main transit hub, where high-frequency bus and rail transit converge.

## VISUALIZATION OF BOULDER AVENUE



Before



After

Downtown has many opportunities to develop additional housing, employment, and amenities on vacant lots or surface parking lots. Additional transit options will help tie downtown to the rest of the city.



Restaurants and cafes are destinations for visitors as well as people who live and work downtown.

## VISUALIZATION OF PINE AND PEORIA



Before



After

Buildings in transit-oriented areas along major arterials will be built up to the sidewalk and generally range from one- to five-stories in height.



Corridors are pairings of land use and transportation.

### Corridors

Corridors will stitch the city together, and they serve as both travel routes and destinations. They will serve local and regional traffic, but they will also be places with jobs, housing and shopping amenities. Tulsa's corridors will be divided into two main categories: **high-capacity arterial streets** that support several travel methods such as cars, bikes and transit, and lower-volume **main streets** that serve neighbors and visitors alike.

### Major Arterials

Major arterial streets with a variety of transportation options will be the backbone of Tulsa's transportation system. While the majority of people will still travel by car, some arterials will have dedicated lanes for buses, as well as for bicycles. The urban design within arterials should be comfortable for pedestrians, and the infrastructure will include sidewalks, street trees, crosswalks and on-street parking.

The types of land uses along these arterials will vary. High-speed and high-volume arterials usually attract only auto-oriented businesses such as big-box stores, gas stations, and drive-through restaurants. These types of uses, which dominate many of Tulsa's arterials today, will remain a part of Tulsa's urban fabric in the future. However, smaller-scale businesses tend to thrive in more pedestrian-oriented shopping districts. These areas typically will have wider sidewalks, street trees, and parallel parking to provide some separation between traffic and the pedestrian.

Pedestrian improvements are especially important at light rail stations and other major transit centers, where higher-density employment, mixed-use housing, retail, services, and other uses are clustered together. These areas will be carefully selected to maximize benefits to the transit system and the surrounding neighborhoods. A good example of such an area is a large hospital campus, which may have higher density housing nearby for employees and some retail shops. Buildings in transit-oriented areas are typically built up to the sidewalk and generally range from one- to five-stories in height.

## Main Streets

Main streets represent some of Tulsa’s most interesting and lively streetscapes today, and will continue in the future. They will serve surrounding neighborhoods, and also will attract visitors to cafes, shops and eateries—lending each main street its own unique flavor and vibe. Traffic travels slower on main streets than on arterials, and they will have fewer lanes. It will be easy to park once on the street or in a shared parking lot, then walk to destinations. The walking environment will be pleasant, with wide sidewalks, street trees, benches, and other pedestrian amenities.

In older parts of the city, main streets will serve as linear neighborhood centers, where grocery stores, restaurants, and other local-serving businesses are located. Because they also tend to specialize in different types of businesses, such as dining, galleries, or apparel, they will continue to attract visitors from around the region.

Buildings along main streets will typically be built up to the sidewalk, and generally range from one- to three-stories in height, but can be taller, depending on the urban design plans for an area.



Lively sidewalk cafes are an essential part of any thriving main street.

## CORRIDORS AND EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

Regardless of type, most of Tulsa’s corridors have existing single-family neighborhoods close by, so the heights of buildings and kinds of activities in them must be carefully considered. The overarching goal of corridors within the PLANITULSA vision is to make the most of the city’s transportation facilities while preserving and enhancing surrounding communities.

Daniel Jeffries



Shops along Greenwood Avenue provide examples for how new main street areas in Tulsa could look.



The Brookside area is an important main street area, serving both the neighborhood and visitors from around the region.

## EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT



New centers will arrange jobs, housing, and amenities so it is easy to walk from one to the other.



Employment centers could include hospital campuses or large office complexes with consolidated parking areas and access to transit.

### New Centers

While Tulsa's downtown will be a primary housing and employment center of the city and the region, new centers will develop as additional employment, shopping, and entertainment clusters.

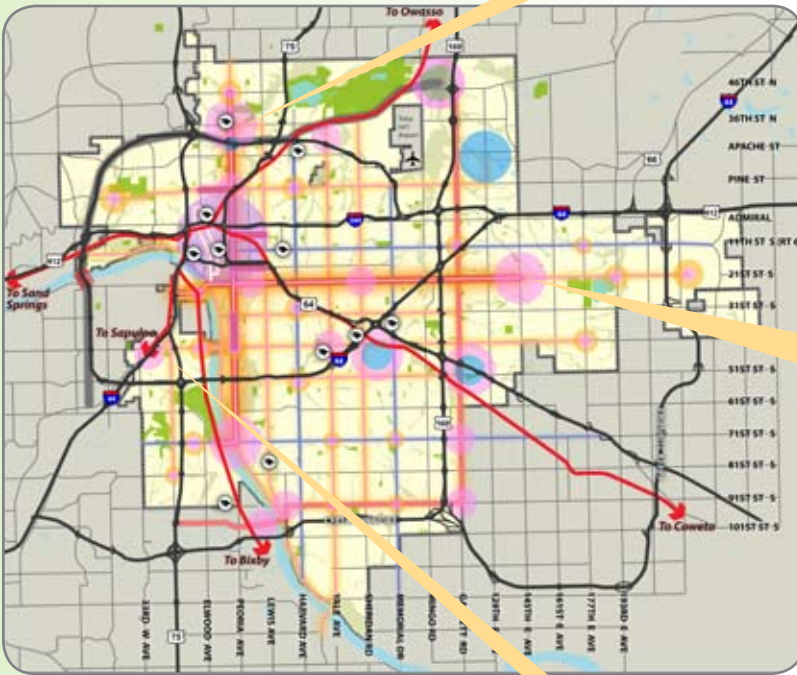
Tulsa's new centers will be designed to provide people with access to many goods and services in a relatively small area, which will make it easier to make just one trip. They also will be designed to support the regional and local transportation systems, since people can drive, take transit, walk or bike where they need to go.

Tulsa's new centers will include a range of different uses, from large-scale office, medical or other employment clusters, to regional retail, entertainment and recreational facilities. They will be served by frequent bus or light rail transit and include shared parking facilities for those who drive. As primarily pedestrian-oriented places, they will be designed with paths and connections that make it easy to walk and bike. New centers will feature plazas and parks, as well as retail shops and services so people can run errands without having to drive elsewhere. Where appropriate, some new centers will include mixed-use housing of moderately high densities.

Places such as hospitals, office buildings, and other enterprises with many people in one place will be a natural fit for pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use centers. Warehousing, transportation businesses, and large-scale manufacturers may not be as well suited to these areas due to their unique transportation and floorspace needs. Those employment uses will be addressed separately in the comprehensive plan.

# EVOLUTION OF CENTERS

## 3 POTENTIAL NEW CENTERS



**Northland:** The Northland area is located at 36th Street North and Peoria Avenue. Nearby is the Tulsa Technology Center, Hawthorne Elementary School, and Northland Center, one of Tulsa's original shopping malls. Under the vision, this area will be better served by frequent transit services in both directions on Peoria and to downtown. It will accommodate additional mixed-use housing, retail, and services along 36th Street North and Peoria to support activities at the new University of Oklahoma-Tulsa Specialty Clinic. The Comanche Apartments could be redeveloped with a well-connected street pattern, a neighborhood park and a mix of single-family homes and apartments and condominiums. The area's schools, Walt Whitman and Hawthorne Elementary, will be better integrated with the neighborhoods, allowing students to walk or bike to school.

**Eastgate Metroplex:** The Eastgate Metroplex, at East 21st Street and South 145th East Avenue, currently is an employment center, having been converted from a retail shopping mall. Under the vision, this area will continue to develop as an employment center and will be enhanced with transit service to downtown and neighborhoods in between. Retail, grocery and other services will be added to the office and other employment uses, transforming the area into a mixed-use center. Surrounding vacant land will provide space to develop new homes in a compact, pedestrian-friendly community that is predominantly single family, but also includes some townhomes, apartments and condos. These new neighborhoods will expand the range of transit-accessible housing options for people who work in the area, or along Garnett Road or East 21st Street.

## EASTGATE METROPLEX FUTURE VISION



Under the vision, this area will continue to develop as an employment center and will be enhanced with retail, amenities, and transit service to downtown.

**Southwest Tulsa:** The Southwest Tulsa area is centered near the intersection of Southwest Boulevard and West 41st Street, on the west side of the Arkansas River. This area includes RedFork Main Street, Tulsa's only participant in the national Main Street Program. The community is rich in local history and was the focus of planning and revitalization efforts before the PLANiTULSA process. The focus of this area will be to accommodate new development and some infill housing while maintaining the character of the neighborhood. Under the vision this neighborhood will evolve around its historic main street along the northern stretch of Southwest Boulevard and West 41st Street. It boasts many opportunities for reinvestment and small-scale infill development that will complement historic structures. The surrounding neighborhoods would be enhanced with bike routes and pedestrian improvements.



New residential neighborhoods will consist mostly of single-family homes.



This rendering of a new residential neighborhood illustrates how streets and paths will connect homes and parks and other amenities.

## New Residential Neighborhoods

New neighborhoods will combine the best aspects of Tulsa’s single-family neighborhoods—spacious, quiet and affordable—with nearby retail and services, accessibility to jobs and a range of housing types from which to choose.

In keeping with Tulsa’s tradition of single-family neighborhoods, new neighborhoods will mostly consist of individual homes. These areas also will include some townhomes and two- or three-story condominiums or apartments with some shops, services and a central park or green nearby. Small-scale apartments or condos can be designed to blend in with single-family neighborhoods or along their edges. Churches and schools will continue to be important parts of Tulsa’s community and culture, and new neighborhoods will be designed so residents can easily reach them on foot, by bike or car.

The key aspect of a new neighborhood will be accessibility, both within the community and to the city’s overall transportation network. Streets will not necessarily have to be laid out on a grid, but should provide a variety of routes and include bike lanes and sidewalks. Connectivity will be important to prevent local traffic from overwhelming nearby streets.

New neighborhoods will usually be organized around a town center where grocery stores, retail shops, and services are located within a short walking or driving distance. Civic spaces such as parks, plazas and squares can also be included. These areas are served by frequent bus or rail transit, making it easy to stop at the store on the way home.



## Existing Residential Neighborhoods

Tulsa's original single-family neighborhoods will continue to be among its most vital assets. They will be preserved in this new vision, and where needed, revitalized. Nearby main streets and major arterial streets will be enhanced with sidewalks, bike lanes and better transit service. These corridors will also provide shops, restaurants and other amenities within walking distance of homes.

In areas of historically significant—but underserved—neighborhoods, there will be reinvestment and improvements. The city's reinvestment programs will help homeowners improve houses and apartment buildings by providing funds or assistance to upgrade windows, install additional insulation and make other repairs.

Parks, schools and churches will continue to be important community assets, and will be protected and maintained. With walking and biking investments, school-aged children will be able to walk to and from school, as they did for much of Tulsa's history.



Building blocks include existing neighborhoods, which are some of Tulsa's most treasured assets.



The city will direct reinvestment programs to assist homeowners in repairing their homes.



Improvements to existing neighborhoods will include sidewalk and bike route improvements to better connect them with main streets and corridors.

## Plan Chapter Transportation

Tulsans will have a wide variety of transportation choices for getting around town. Those who live in neighborhoods near the city's major boulevards will be able to drive, bike, or catch a quick and reliable bus or streetcar to just about anywhere. The network of transit options, large arterials, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and employment centers will result in one of the safest, most efficient transportation systems in the country. Commuters will spend half as much time delayed in traffic as they did in 2009, with most trips to work being as short as 10 minutes.

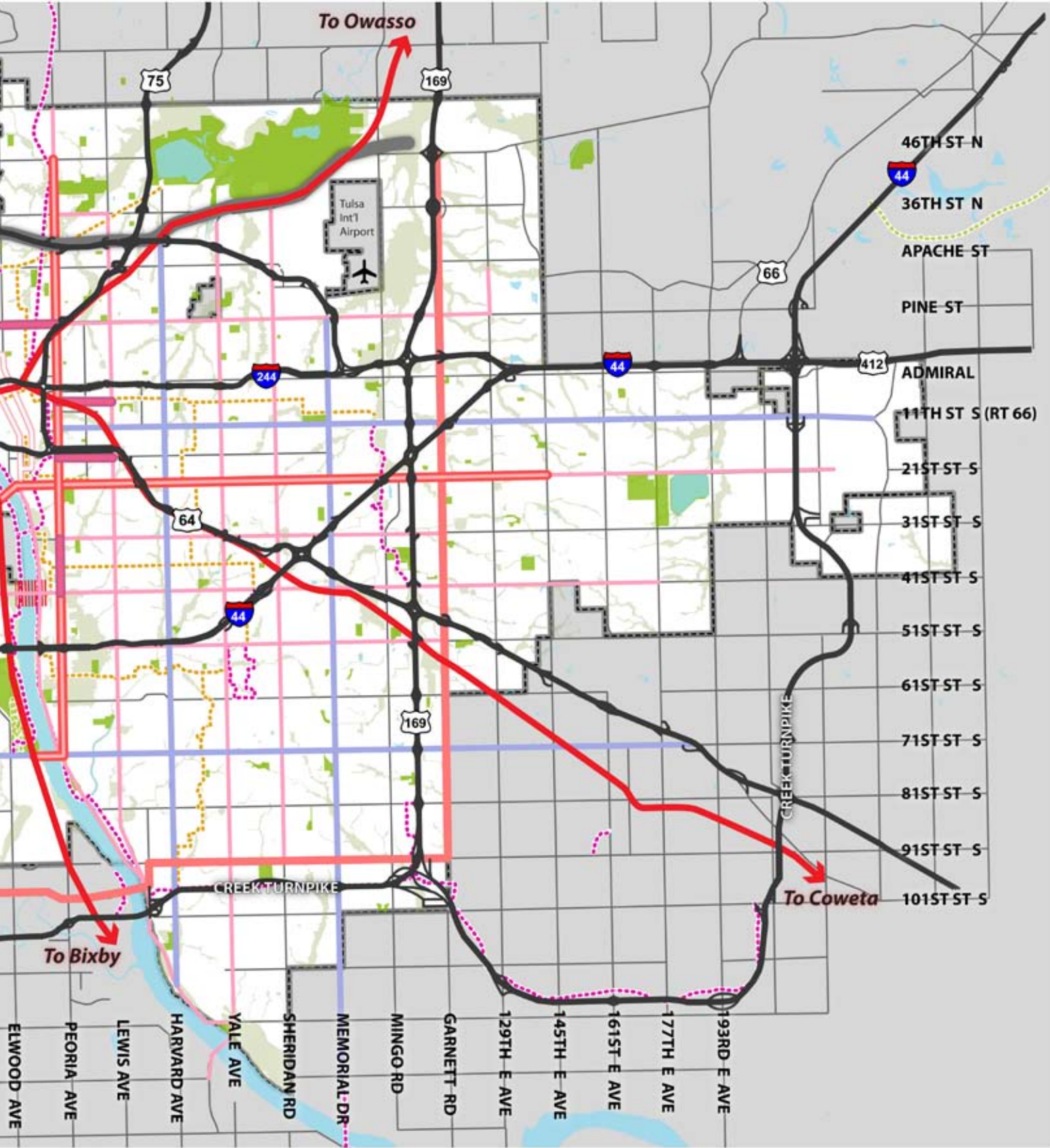
The transportation chapter will address:

- Network Connectivity
- Walking and Biking
- Transit
- Highways and Freight
- Smart Parking



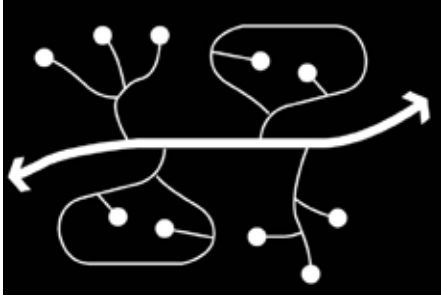
### Transportation - Legend

- Rail Transit
- Streetcar
- Frequent Bus
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Multimodal Corridors
- Main Street
- Commuter Corridor
- Multimodal Bridge
- Freight Corridor
- Multi-Use Trail
- Bicycle Trail
- Hiking Trail
- Existing/Planned Expressways
- Regional Parks
- Open Space

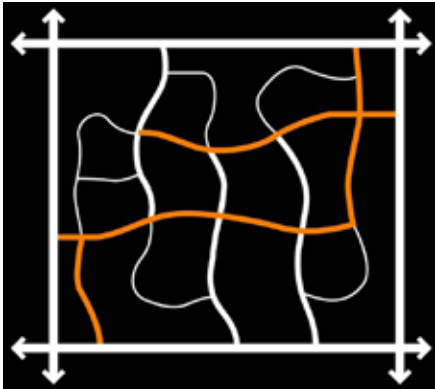


## NETWORK CONNECTIVITY

Disconnected streets discourage through traffic and can create more privacy, but discourage walking and biking, create longer car trips, and increase traffic in adjacent arterials.



Tulsa's new street systems will use connectivity and traffic calming to get the best of both worlds—quiet neighborhood streets with good accessibility.



Safe and efficient transit modes combined with appropriate land uses will increase transportation options for all Tulsans.

## Network Connectivity

Tulsa's new streets will be designed to reinforce connectivity within and throughout the city. Connected streets decrease traffic on adjacent arterials, shorten distances, and improve conditions for walking and biking. Disconnected streets may enhance privacy and discourage through traffic, but they also hinder walking and biking, and create longer car trips. Tulsa's new street systems will use connectivity and traffic calming to get the best of both worlds—quiet neighborhood streets with good access and connectivity.

## Walking and Biking

Among the biggest changes that will take place are thousands of small but important improvements to the city's walking infrastructure. Many neighborhoods, which today are dangerous places for all pedestrians, will be improved with safer sidewalks, better-designed intersections, and other features that alert drivers to pedestrians. The city will continue to develop and expand its network of paths and trails. Bikes will be a popular way to get around town when the weather is nice. Bicyclists may make up a significant percentage of travel, especially for the short one- to two-mile trips.

## Transit

Downtown, nearby university districts, new centers, and the city's main streets and multi-modal arterials will be some of the most intensively walked parts of the city. They will also be the most transit-rich, with frequent bus, streetcar, and rail transit service within a couple blocks of most homes and businesses. Commuters from Southeast Tulsa and Broken Arrow will have quick and easy access to downtown on a commuter rail line. There will be an emphasis on making transit an easy, pleasant, and competitive transportation option. Initially, Tulsa will invest in two or three key corridors with frequent bus service to downtown from North and East Tulsa. Over time, key housing and employment developments will add riders, and enhancements will spread throughout the city.

## Highways and Freight

Investments in walking, biking, and transit will help the city grow while minimizing traffic congestion. Tulsa's investments in a variety of in-town transportation options will help prevent the region's highways from becoming congested as the city grows. These highways will serve regional travelers and freight trucks, which should not have to compete with local commuters. Freight travel and distribution will be improved through strategic investments to disentangle freight and local traffic. Freight routes, which historically were routed through downtown, will be shifted to the Gilcrease Expressway Extension. This will alleviate help prevent congestion and deliver goods to a major industrial and warehouse area just east of Tulsa International Airport. The multi-modal facility will revitalize Tulsa as a major regional freight hub, and breathe new life into the local manufacturing industry.

## Smart Parking

While transit, biking and walking are important pieces of the transportation system, Tulsans, generally, will still own and drive cars. The city's approach to parking will make optimal use of the land along main streets, downtown, and in new centers to better support pedestrian-friendly places. New centers, downtown and other gathering places will be served by parking districts, which provide just the right amount of parking capacity. Offices usually do not need parking spaces in the evenings, when restaurants and residences do, so these uses can share the same spaces over the course of the day. New development will no longer be required to provide large amounts of on-site parking for the one or two days a year it is used, but will be able to use public spaces already on the street and public lots or garages that serve many businesses. This will not preclude builders from including additional parking on-site, but lower minimums will allow the marketplace to determine how much parking is needed.



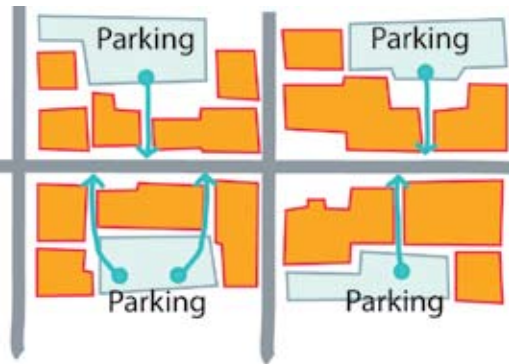
The unencumbered movement of freight will continue to be crucial to Tulsa's economic prosperity.



Parking garages may be phased in over time as an area develops. Mixed-use parking garages with retail on the ground floor blend in well with their surroundings.



Main streets should be attractive interesting places with wide sidewalks and on-street parking.



In addition to on-street parking, shared lots in centers and main streets can be located behind buildings.

## How We Get There

Tulsa is well positioned to forge this transportation vision. The city's street grid, highways and rail lines provide an excellent base on which to build a future with more options for getting around town. Designing new transportation infrastructure in concert with thoughtful land-use decisions will create a sustainable transportation system for future generations.

The process will begin modestly, by acknowledging that transportation defines communities. In the same way that roadways spur development today, transit and livable streets will fuel the new economy which will focus on entrepreneurialism, retaining younger people and creating an urban experience.

Tulsa will implement this new vision and create sustainable communities by:

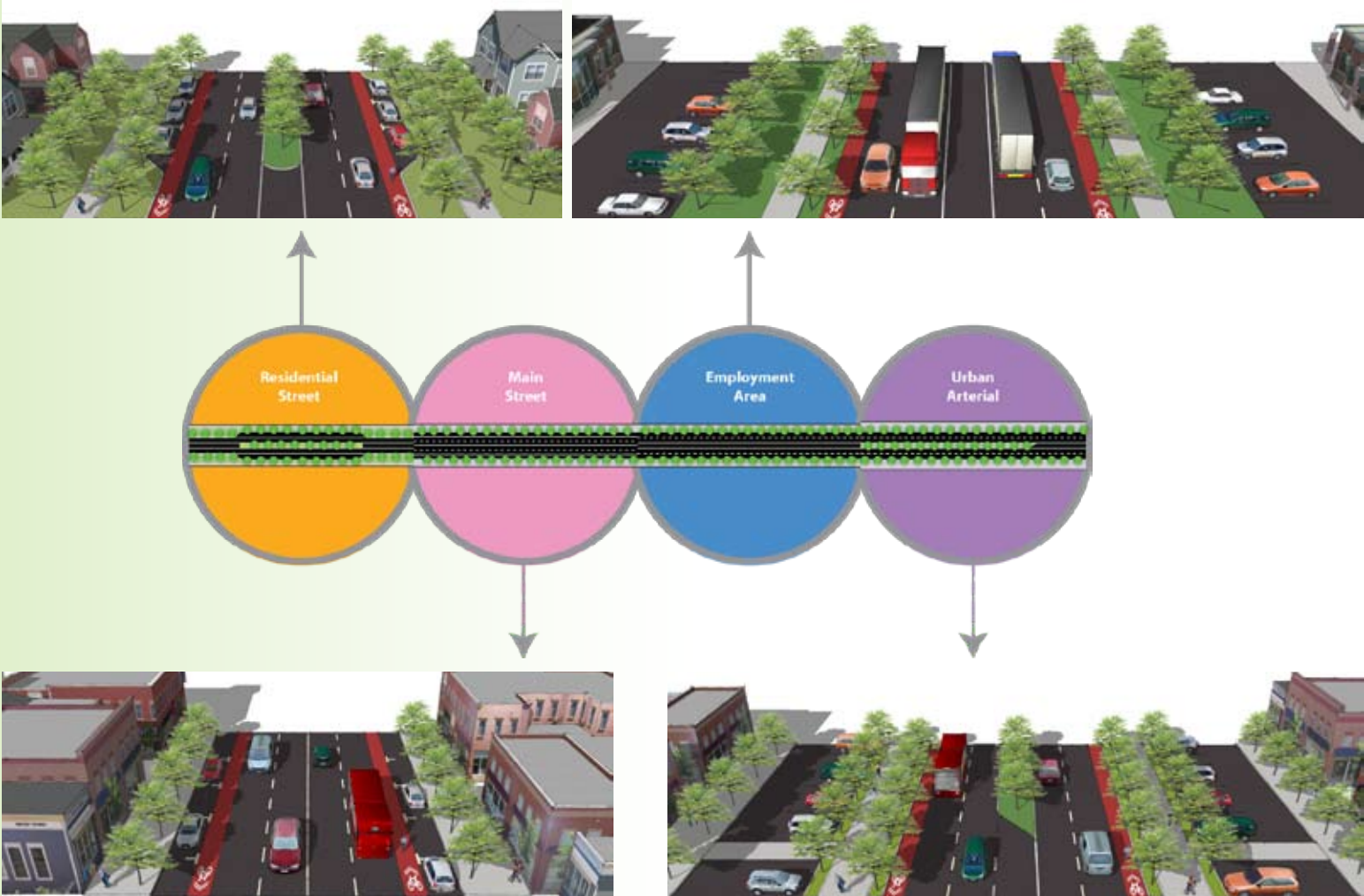
- **Redesigning** key streets into main streets and corridors with many transportation options.
- **Revolutionizing** freight commerce by building a state-of-the-art facility that combines rail, truck, barge and air cargo.
- **Using** new technology that helps traffic signals better manage transit and cars.
- **Implementing** real-time travel information systems that alert drivers and transit riders to congestion or delays.
- **Redesigning** streets so they support options in addition to cars, while also being context sensitive to neighborhoods, businesses and the environment.
- **Forging** funding partnerships that reward the private sector for building sustainable projects that complement walking, biking and transit.

### CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is a planning process by which transportation projects are designed to serve all users and meet the needs of the community and environment through which they pass. Traditionally streets have been designed to have the same layout throughout their length. CSS adapts the lanes, parking and sidewalks to meet the needs of the surrounding area, while accommodating the traffic flow.

Tulsa's new approach to streets will incorporate Context Sensitive Solutions. This increasingly-popular technique ensures that a continuous length of road provides adequate vehicle capacity while supporting surrounding land uses. Many of the world's greatest streets and boulevards feature this type of design, and they have endured both as important corridors and places for people to live, work, and play.

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT AL - Streets should respond to the land use around them.



## TESTING INNOVATIVE BUILDING MODELS

The PLANITULSA team collaborated with builders, financial institutions and stakeholders to create several innovative building models for Tulsa. These models exemplify the mixed-use places that were popular in the public workshops. They combine housing, retail, and employment uses and use innovative parking techniques.

The models were calibrated with realistic financial and construction cost assumptions gathered from local builders and financiers. These will serve as guides for proposed changes to Tulsa's zoning code, and will provide examples for developers on how to help make the vision a reality.



Mixed-use residential model with parking on the ground floor behind a ground-floor retail space.



Bob Smith

The BOK Center is an important catalyst for rebuilding downtown's regional profile.

## Plan Chapter Economic Development

How Tulsa's future is shaped will depend a great deal on its economic prosperity. Tulsa will need a vigorous and strategic approach to economic development. It must be coordinated with policies on land use, housing, transportation and the factors that affect residents' quality of life like parks, open space, and education. While we can improve our economic fortune by focusing on our strengths, like aerospace, energy, and health care, we must also support entrepreneurs and emerging small businesses, who will grow the industries of the future. Recent increased coordination by the city economic development department and Tulsa's chambers of commerce have seen important gains in all areas of the city. This coordination should continue to be a focus in the city, with renewed emphasis on a unified city development group that advocates projects and programs in conjunction with the city's chambers and makes available a complete package of tools to support economic development negotiations.



## How we get there

To achieve this economic future, Tulsa's public- and private-sector leadership will need to align interests and embrace partnerships that can:

- **Pursue** business retention and recruitment efforts that build on existing and emerging industry clusters.
- **Stimulate** aggressive redevelopment in downtown, town centers, corridor and existing industrial areas.
- **Expand** existing business ventures, recruit new ones, develop a more vibrant, sustainable downtown and new centers.
- **Create** an environment that welcomes new ventures, particularly those generated by the creative class.
- **Strengthen** workforce development programs and partnerships with higher educational institutions.
- **Enhance** connections among higher education research and programs, private business and public agencies.
- **Improve** the quality of all public schools, through planning, strategic partnerships, and neighborhood revitalization.
- **Ensure** that the city captures its share of regional job growth, about 40,000 new jobs.
- **Stimulate** job growth in target cluster industries, such as health care and aerospace, which provide good wages and that are expected to grow.

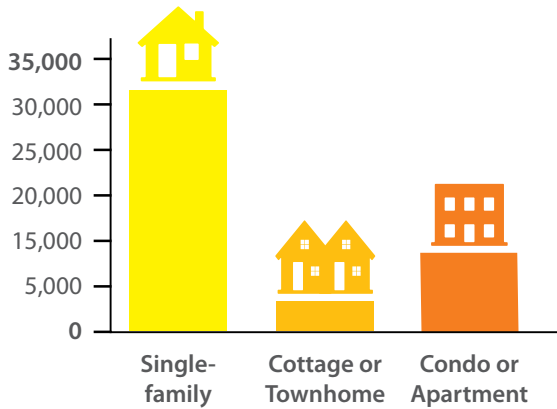


Redesigned "big box" model on a major corridor with additional employment uses and shared parking.



The city should help strengthen partnerships between employers and educational and training institutions.

## TULSA'S FUTURE HOUSING DEMAND BY TYPE OF UNIT



Based on the forecast used for the PLANITULSA process, the demand for single-family homes will continue as the strongest housing type, with about 31,000 new units needed. Demand for multi-family units, such as apartments and condos, will be about 13,000 units. About 4,000 units of townhomes will be needed.



Affordable, single-family housing remains a top priority for Tulsans.



New condominiums and apartments will provide additional options for smaller households, young people, and empty nesters.

## Plan Chapter Housing

A newcomer to Tulsa in the future will have a wide range of housing choices, from beautiful early 20th century homes, to classic suburban neighborhoods. Most of Tulsa's housing stock will consist up of single-family homes in neighborhoods, but will include a broader range of apartments and condominiums in downtown, along corridors, and in new neighborhoods and centers. Young families will be able to find townhomes and traditional detached homes in new neighborhoods, all within walking distance of schools and parks. Empty nesters, looking to downsize to smaller, more manageable homes, will also have many options.

## How We Get There

Tulsa should take several key steps to create this variety of housing options:

### Promote Balanced Housing Types and Affordability

The city should encourage constructing a variety of housing types and costs for both renters and owners. These housing types will include some similar to those already developed in Tulsa, such as single-family homes or apartments, but also some that will be relatively new for Tulsa, such as mixed-use residential or urban townhomes. The growing number of smaller households, such as empty nesters and young single people, means there will be more demand for one-bedroom homes, studios, and downtown apartments. Energy efficiency will be at a premium, and most new buildings will be designed to require much less intensive heating and cooling equipment than today.

### Preserve Tulsa's Existing Housing

The largest stock of Tulsa's housing was built over the 20th century, long before the PLANiTULSA process began. Established neighborhoods, beloved by Tulsans, have provided a strong foundation for a thriving city. Some areas have suffered from decline or neglect, though, and the City will work to revitalize those neighborhoods. Currently, the City has a large supply of existing homes affordable at the low and very low income levels. Areas such as North Tulsa will benefit from reconstruction, rehabilitation, and weatherization programs. The City needs a special team to streamline the design and permitting process, and identify matching funds from weatherization and energy efficiency programs to assist in paying for upgrades through low-interest loans or grants.

### Facilitate Urban Living Downtown

Tulsa's downtown provides the best opportunity to provide new urban homes to those Tulsans, including transplants, who will seek city-style living. The PLANiTULSA workshops found that nearly one in five Tulsans, including young people, empty-nesters, and

retirees, want to live in a pedestrian-friendly downtown close to work, shops and nightlife. Tulsa's large supply of under used historic office buildings is uniquely suited for reuse as flats and condominiums. Downtown's many surface parking lots can be converted to mixed-use residential and office buildings, with expanded underground parking facilities shared by commuters and residents. Downtown Tulsa, while not everyone's preference, will be a more lively and animated place at all hours of the day, thanks to the many people who will live here.

### Prioritize Transit-Oriented Development on Key Corridors

For those who want to have easy access to transit but don't necessarily want to live downtown, Tulsa should embrace transit-oriented development (TOD) along key bus, light rail, and streetcar corridors. TODs include a balance of housing and other uses around key transit areas. These developments are more compact than typical single-family neighborhoods and provide homes in mixed-use buildings, multi-family buildings and townhomes. They are designed to blend in with neighborhoods that surround them, and provide them with shopping, services and other amenities within walking distance.

### Promote Housing for Tulsa's Students

One of Tulsa's major priorities will be to partner with higher education institutions to attract and retain students. Our premier colleges and universities can work with the city to find ways to develop quality, affordable student housing. These will be primarily rental apartments, flats and dormitory houses located on or near campuses. Campus villages with restaurants, cafes, and entertainment will provide fun places to meet friends or go out for a night on the town. School, home, and nearby shopping, services, restaurants, and other campus amenities will be accessible by transit, bike or foot. Direct access to downtown's employers will be available via transit, so students can easily get to on-the-job training or internship programs.



Urban parks that draw a diversity of visitors enliven and strengthen the communities around them.



Concerts at River Parks attract visitors to the city and provide Tulsans of all ages with entertainment.

## Plan Chapter Parks

Tulsa’s park system will be hailed as one of the most extensive and heavily used in Oklahoma. Most Tulsans will live near a neighborhood park and will be able to walk or bike there.

Parks and schools are today and will continue to be important gathering places in neighborhoods around the city. Schools will be able to coordinate with the city’s parks department to combine daytime playgrounds, pools, sports fields and other amenities with their own facilities.

Downtown, as a thriving urban center, will have parks strategically placed throughout the area for daytime workers, residents and visitors to enjoy. Careful planning will ensure that small pocket parks are surrounded by mixed-use residential buildings that will provide “eyes on the park” during evenings and weekends. Families will make great use of new parks with fountains and water features, which can serve as a unique gathering place for kids and adults alike.

Tulsa’s relationship with the Arkansas River will be strengthened by a deliberate strategy to connect downtown, River Parks and other neighborhoods with trails, plazas and parks. The River Parks system, which was developed prior to PLANiTULSA, will continue to be a major regional attraction and will grow as a bike and pedestrian transportation corridor for those who work downtown.

### PLANiTULSA and the Parks Master Plan of 2009

Concurrent with the PLANiTULSA process, Tulsa is developing a new Parks Master Plan, with a targeted completion date of 2009. This plan will provide a clear vision for the park system and will establish an important strategic direction for the future. PLANiTULSA supports the parks master planning effort and will integrate the goals, results and actions into the over arching PLANiTULSA vision.

## Plan Chapter Open Space

Tulsa’s natural environments—waterways, floodplains and open space—provide a break from the hustle and bustle of living in an urban environment. Tulsans are proud of our natural landscapes, and in the future we will have even more to celebrate.

Instead of cordoning off natural areas, Tulsa will integrate them into the fabric of city life and urban design. Developers will recognize that their projects are more valuable when people can easily reach open spaces from home or work. Schools will have partnerships with the city parks department to create outdoor learning programs, clean-up projects and recreational camps.

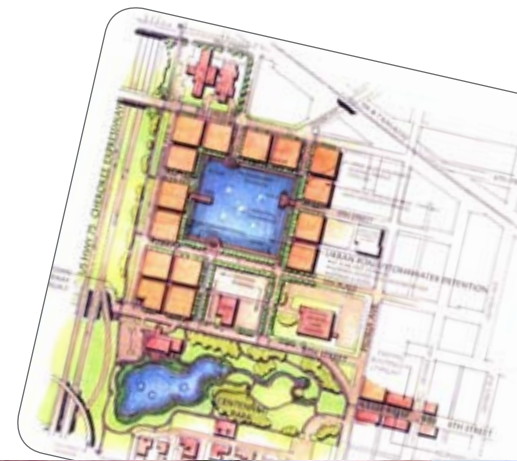
### Nature in the City

Natural areas should not just be found in the hinterlands. Tulsa’s urban areas will be threaded with trails and green spaces that provide shade and respite. These amenities will reduce the urban heat island effect, which raises temperatures in the city when heat is absorbed by pavement and rooftops. Floodplain and stormwater management will also continue to be an important tool for creating and preserving natural resources in the city. Tulsa will continue to be a leader in this field and will also develop further innovations. New developments will be designed to capture and treat storm water in rain gardens or similar facilities that double as landscaping.

Regional open spaces, such as the Turkey Mountain Urban Wilderness Area, Mohawk Park, the Arkansas River, and other areas will be protected from development and enhanced with trails and paths so that the entire community can enjoy them. The Arkansas River will continue to be improved and preserved by stormwater management and pollution control efforts, making it a valuable regional attraction for fishing, kayaking, canoeing, and other water sports.



Preserving Tulsa’s natural environment is important for future generations. Creating new and maintaining existing open spaces within the city offers Tulsans access to nature and can help to offset the urban heat island effect.



Development in Tulsa’s Pearl District may include stormwater management systems that also serve as water features.



U.S. Green Building Council

Tulsa already has examples of new high-efficiency buildings, which will serve as valuable models for future development.



New neighborhoods and centers will be designed as complete communities with a variety of uses and transportation options.

## Plan Chapter Sustainability and the Built Environment

In the energy-constrained world of the future, Tulsa will be a major leader in creating high quality places for people to live, work, and play ... but with a small footprint on the environment. Here are some concepts that will help Tulsa continue to move forward in this area:

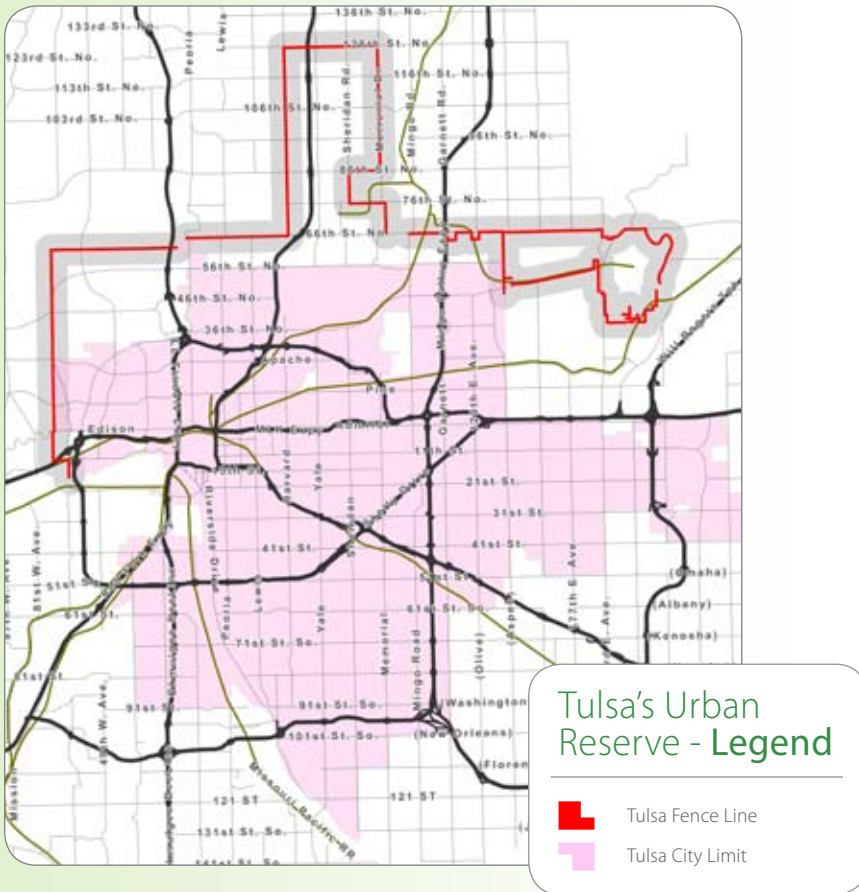
### Efficient Building Design

New buildings in Tulsa will be designed to be more energy efficient and have a lighter touch on the environment than those of today. Buildings should be designed with Tulsa's climate in mind, to make use of passive solar heating during the winter, energy-efficient cooling in the summer, and efficient lighting year-round. Many new homes should include sustainable features, such as solar water heaters, non-toxic building materials, and solar energy systems, where applicable. This approach to energy savings and design will help create buildings that are less costly to maintain.

### New Neighborhood and Center Design

Tulsa should ensure that new places—neighborhoods or employment areas—also are designed with sustainability in mind. Good street connections, with sidewalks, bike facilities, and other transportation options will be encouraged. Transit centers are near the core of each center, thus connecting them to the rest of the city. New and existing neighborhoods may also benefit from innovations in local- and district-wide energy systems that use geothermal, biomass, or other sources.

Growth and development strategies that embrace sustainable practices will yield financial benefits as well. Well built compact communities will be more fiscally sustainable by reducing maintenance costs and reducing waste over the long term.



## ANNEXING NEW LAND

In 1966, the city of Tulsa began to annex a “fence line”—a strip of land about 100 feet wide—that extends from the city limits into unincorporated areas. Technically, the fence line is a ribbon of incorporated land and currently encompasses about 20,000 acres. It is a form of reserve for future growth, and prevents annexation by other cities.

These areas will eventually be fully incorporated by the city. While PLANiTULSA does not envision a growth management boundary, new annexation areas should be planned with sufficient infrastructure to support mixed-use new communities that will blend seamlessly with the rest of the city.

## Urbanization and Annexation

Unlike many cities that are not constrained by available land, Tulsa will be dedicated to making the most of each new neighborhood and center before expanding the urban realm. The city has about 31,000 acres of vacant land already within its boundaries. The Tulsa Metropolitan Utility Authority is charged with the management and planning of urban services, and analyzes the costs and benefits of service extensions and annexations. This rigorous process will be continued.

New urban areas should provide an adequate and diverse supply of housing types, convenient retail, services, and employment areas, and seamless connections, including bicycle paths and transit options, with the city’s transportation network.

Tulsa should regularly monitor its need for employment and housing, ensuring that new land is annexed in an orderly manner. While this sometimes can be a contentious process, it is important to make the most of public dollars and to ensure that new annexations serve the city effectively. Through new policies, the city should develop and implement a clear and predictable process to bring new areas into the urban fabric.



Matt Moffett

## How We Will Achieve Our Vision

While creating the vision is a critically important step, effective implementation will be the measure of its success. How will Tulsa make the vision a reality? Which policy changes and strategic investments will be the most important?

Several overarching, big-picture changes need to occur as Tulsa transforms this vision into reality:

### **Remove Barriers to Desired Actions**

Sometimes change occurs only when we consider and approach things differently. For Tulsa, this means ensuring that the easiest path is the right path. Tulsa's land-use program and enforcement regulations must be driven by the goals they are meant to achieve. Owners, for example, must be able to determine easily and efficiently how property can be developed. Variances should be granted rarely if allowed uses are clear and support a community vision. When something supports the vision—such as filling a key niche along a main street or reusing a vacant building—it should be encouraged.

### **Coordinate Public Investments**

Infrastructure investments, particularly in roads, mass transit, water, and sewer systems, have a tremendous impact on how land is developed. The city will need to realign its public investments in infrastructure, planning, and other basic functions of government with the strategies outlined in the comprehensive plan. This means ensuring that underdeveloped land within the city is served by the infrastructure it will need to accommodate new businesses or homes. New infrastructure for communities on undeveloped land should be extended in a coordinated way—avoiding costly, ineffective and unattractive “leapfrog” development.



## Create New Strategic Partnerships

Finally, the city will need to think differently—and creatively—about new strategic partnerships and initiatives with key stakeholders. Among the primary stakeholder groups are educational institutions, including public school districts, universities and colleges, and other public and private schools. This initiative could include collaborating to develop college/university campuses supported by vibrant mixed-use areas, and working with primary and secondary schools to ensure students can safely walk or bike to school. The city also can continue to partner with Tulsa’s major foundations and philanthropic organizations as well as the chambers of commerce to support projects and investments to diversify the city’s housing choices, expand the employment base and cultural offerings, and accelerate the pace of neighborhood redevelopment.

## Plan for Action

Each of these initiatives represents a change in the way the city does business. The planning process will not end with the vision document, but instead must be fortified with key objectives and implementation steps. Long-range plans take time to implement, but they will languish if substantive progress does not occur soon after adoption. Plans at the city- and neighborhood-levels should be aligned with a capital improvement timetable, and where possible, innovative projects should be used to jump-start community momentum.

Tulsa has the opportunity to use the PLANiTULSA process to reframe the way it plans, invests and collaborates with key stakeholders and communities to achieve on the ground results. This means setting high-impact, achievable goals, both for city departments and the community. For example, the city should ensure that land development approvals can be more swiftly and easily completed in Tulsa than in competing communities—then implement a process to make it possible. Through defining such performance measures, the city will find ways to reshape itself to deliver on PLANiTULSA’s greater objectives. The residents of Tulsa have shown we believe our community can be a better place. Now we look to our public and private leaders to lead the way.

Linda Allen



## Proposed Strategies

Specific implementation strategies to reshape fundamental aspects of Tulsa's approach to land use, transportation, and economic development will build and sustain the vision.

### Step 1: Revise the Zoning Code

Realigning the city's zoning code with the new comprehensive plan is a critically important step. A zoning code is the enforceable policy behind the plan's recommendations and guidelines. For every new development, the zoning code addresses the most pertinent details, from required parking to building height. Most zoning codes, like Tulsa's, are designed to protect people and to prevent harm. While this is important, it is just half of the whole picture. A complete zoning code protects from harm and helps a developer understand community priorities for a particular location and how to build successfully there.

Tulsa's zoning code should:

#### Be Easy to Use

Overall, the zoning code should be a user-friendly document that clearly and logically explains how the regulations meet the plan's goals. A developer should be able to determine easily how to develop a piece of property. The need to seek variances, planned unit developments, and other exceptions should be minimized, and the zoning approvals process should be short and easy to navigate.

The zoning code should include diagrams and illustrations to explain concepts, such as preferred parking layouts, building heights, and whether upper stories should be stepped back from the street. But it also should not over-regulate, so that a designer can create a building that meets the needs of the users and the community.

### Allow More Diverse Building Types

The PLANiTULSA workshops showed significant support for a more diverse range of buildings and places, in particular, mixed-use developments that combine homes, shops and businesses. Generally, Tulsa's current zoning code prohibits mixed-use developments by right, except downtown, along corridors, and in special discretionary planned development zones. These special zones require approval, and provide no certainty for developers or neighbors. In short, the current system has it backward. To accurately reflect what Tulsans requested through the PLANiTULSA process, the zoning code should explicitly define and allow these kinds of places, particularly along corridors and in new neighborhoods and centers. Expanding the range of possible building types will be crucial to meeting the city's economic development and housing goals as defined in the vision.

### Enable Innovative Parking Solutions

Like much of the country, Tulsa requires developers to provide more parking than is often necessary. In many urban neighborhoods, an emerging paradigm provides parking as a form of public utility. Parking district management, as it's called, considers how much parking will be needed along a main street, in a new center, or shopping area, and then seeks to meet that demand with on-street spaces and pooled parking facilities, all within walking distance. Instead of burdening each property with high parking requirements, this approach allows the market to determine how much to include on site. In places such as Brady Village, Brookside and Cherry Street, the benefits would be immediate.

## Align Development Incentives with Goals

Cities commonly offer density, height increases or other bonuses to encourage excellent development practices and design. Tulsa should incorporate similar incentives that are linked directly with the comprehensive plan goals and objectives. The city's zoning code should be another tool that facilitates the kind of development outlined in the vision and comprehensive plan. Bringing plan policy and implementation tools together will be a crucial strategic step.

## Step 2: Create a Redevelopment Strategy

Tulsa has the opportunity to forge a redevelopment future revolving around its downtown, urban corridors, defunct industrial sites, new town centers and currently struggling urban neighborhoods. Redevelopment should broaden the range of housing options, create new spaces for different types of employers, and make efficient use of existing infrastructure. Collaborative partnerships between the public and private sectors will ensure that vital areas of the city become more sustainable and socially and aesthetically vibrant.

## Build on Existing Assets

Tulsa has experienced a range of successful projects in the central city that lend support for more ambitious efforts. Recent examples include the BOK Center, Drillers' Stadium, the adaptive re-use of several historic buildings that have reinforced the promise of urban living (e.g., the Mayo Building, Mayo Hotel and Lofts, Philtower, and the Tribune Lofts).

Tulsa has an abundance of land in and near downtown that is currently under used and a number of vacant buildings. These structures can all be reused in new ways to help rebuild downtown's role as the regional center. Tulsa is also well-positioned to learn from the experiences of other cities about what kinds of redevelopment efforts succeed, which ones fall short of expectations, and why. With many examples from which to draw, Tulsa can make more informed choices and avoid common pitfalls.

Tulsa has established local philanthropic foundations such as the Tulsa Community Foundation, the George Kaiser Family Foundation, the Anne and Henry Zarrow Foundation, and the Zink Foundation, with the commitments and resources necessary to help build a better city.



Redevelopment in Tulsa's downtown, urban corridors, defunct industrial sites, new town centers and currently struggling urban neighborhoods will be a core implementation strategy.

## KEY ELEMENTS OF A REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- Having a shared vision that is acceptable and understood by citizens, developers and public partners
- Identifying and working with property owners who are willing to redevelop. Some sites can be developed with a single project, while others would be more appropriately built in phases
- Recognizing that more and often higher quality projects can be built when risk is reduced and benefits are shared through public-private partnerships
- Making available an effective development toolkit that includes public resources (local, regional, state and federal) and participation from capable and community-minded foundations
- Implementing a city regulatory process that expedites high quality, sustainable redevelopment projects
- Further educating public and private sector leaders about the benefits, risks and processes involved in successful redevelopment strategies

## MAKING THE TRANSPORTATION-LAND USE CONNECTION



People do not drive or take transit just for the sake of traveling, but rather to go places and do things. Allowing more types of land uses—retail, offices, and housing—along one corridor that is served by transit can greatly reduce the distance between those destinations. This reduces the length of trips they must take, and makes walking, biking, and transit more viable alternatives.

### Step 3. Develop a New Transportation Strategy

To meet the vision formed through the PLANiTULSA process, a high level of coordination must be established between the city and other key agencies, notably the Indian Nations Council of Governments (INCOG), Tulsa Transit, the Tulsa Parking Authority, and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. These agencies should have a comprehensive understanding of the multi-faceted transportation and land-use challenges and a consensus approach for solving them.

The following programs, strategies and policies would address these common issues:

#### Create Livable Networks

Tulsa has an orderly street grid and a vast highway network. However, our current approach to traffic congestion consists of expanding car capacity at the expense of all other factors. We should redirect our efforts to helping people get where they want to go and shortening their trips altogether by diversifying land uses along corridors. This is the essence of a livable network—corridors become places as well as transportation facilities.

#### Improve Transportation Modeling Techniques

The local transportation decision-making process should employ the best travel demand modeling available. Modeling allows policy makers to consider pragmatic transportation investment strategies that take into account a number of factors. These include analysis of transportation types that support pedestrians and mixed uses, network-based transportation alternatives that take a look beyond near-term vehicle capacity and delay, and scenarios that consider land-use changes and their impact on transportation. The city, in collaboration with surrounding communities, should continue to work with INCOG to improve modeling capabilities to include consider these additional factors. Tulsa should also advocate for standard modeling methodologies and capabilities both for INCOG and for member jurisdictions, so transportation and land use planning efforts can be well coordinated and evaluated.

## Manage Transportation Assets

Many cities use Intelligent Transportation Systems, which optimize signals, meter on-ramps, and track transit vehicles. Combined with a Transportation Operations Center, this data can be used to provide real-time information to motorists, transit users, and transportation agencies. Finally, under a Transportation Management Program, the city could work directly with large employers and institutions to reduce overall traffic demand with rideshare, car-pool, and transit pass programs.

## Use Context Sensitive Solutions

Context sensitive solutions (CSS) is an approach to transportation planning and design that ensures new facilities are well integrated with existing communities and serve all potential users, from motorists to pedestrians. CSS employs flexibility in project development and design to balance safety, mobility, economic development, and environmental issues for new and redesigned urban transportation facilities. The city should use this approach by adopting the Institute of Transportation Engineer's Recommended Practice for Context Sensitive Urban thoroughfares and consider the following broad policy changes. A more thorough description of CSS is on page 27.

## Modernize Transportation Funding

In cooperation with their regional transportation agencies, many cities, such as Dallas, Seattle, and the San Francisco have reallocated a portion of their discretionary federal and state transportation programs from road-building to programs and strategies that expand transportation choices. Tulsa, in collaboration with surrounding communities, should advocate at INCOG for a similar reallocation of some discretionary funds to support improved integration of land use and transportation.

For example, Sustainable Development grant programs use discretionary federal and state transportation funds to support desired developments and planning efforts. These competitive grant programs support projects that enhance the effectiveness of transit, improve accessibility and mobility, and expand housing choices. Funds can be awarded to help fund infrastructure for mixed use, transit-supportive projects, or to community groups to fund planning efforts.

## CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION



"Context sensitive solutions (CSS) is a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders to develop a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility. CSS is an approach that considers the total context within which a transportation improvement project will exist."

—Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)



CSD ensures that transportation facilities are designed for all users and complement surrounding land uses.



PLANiTULSA's engaging and inclusive public involvement process will serve as a model for planning in key redevelopment areas.



Collaborative efforts between the city, developers, and area foundations will jump-start key catalyst projects based on the PLANiTULSA prototypes.

## Step 4: Conduct Neighborhood and Small Area Planning in Key Areas

Tulsa already has a strong tradition of neighborhood-level planning. Small area or neighborhood plans can serve a range of places, from single corridors to districts of thousands of homes and businesses. The City of Tulsa Planning Department should lead the neighborhood planning process in key areas where redevelopment will help move the city toward the vision.

Because so much of Tulsa's future development will take shape as redevelopment and reinvestment, working with existing residents and stakeholders will be an important part of achieving the vision. The neighborhood planning function should continue its use of citizen engagement, visioning, and design and enhance it with additional techniques developed during the PLANiTULSA process. Neighborhood plans should include an implementation and funding plans consistent with PLANiTULSA, and be supported by a cross-departmental team to move them forward.

## Step 5: Develop Key PLANiTULSA Prototypes as Demonstration Projects

The PLANiTULSA team developed several innovative mixed-use building models that illustrated—both physically and financially—how infill development could take place in the city (see page 28). They represent the kinds of new development Tulsans supported during the public input process, and will help guide development of the city's new zoning code.

The city should form a strategic partnership with the development community and area foundations to locate and build several of these models as actual projects. The designs and locations should be carefully chosen to ensure success and build momentum for further development. The city should use the experience to establish a standard easy-to-implement development process that will enable similar projects to be built by the private sector without city or foundation involvement.

## Step 6: Organize Planning and Development Functions for Implementation

### Taking PLANiTULSA to BUILDiTULSA

*Our Vision for Tulsa* lays out an ambitious agenda for change that will require a high degree of coordination and skill to accomplish. The city will adopt the comprehensive plan, but most of the key projects will be built by the private sector. Therefore, it is crucial that the process of development is clear and easy to follow. Cities that have been successful implementing visionary plans have carefully coordinated their long-range and current planning, capital improvement, economic, and redevelopment programs to reinforce one another.

Organization matters, and currently Tulsa's planning and development functions are spread between many agencies and departments. Development services and economic development functions reside in different departments. The city's redevelopment activities and programs are carried out by the Tulsa Development Authority, and staffed by the City's economic development and real estate management staffs. Neighborhood planning functions are a part of city government. While the city is leading PLANiTULSA, long range planning and zoning is staffed by INCOG under contract with the City, and the Tulsa Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (TMAPC) with both county and city appointees is the key planning advisory body and is responsible for both zoning and comprehensive planning.

For PLANiTULSA to be successful it is critical that the city coordinate development-related activities so they work together to effectively address changes desired by Tulsans. Tulsa should enhance staff capacity and technical skills and consider organizational changes that will allow the city to lead in local land use decision making. These changes could include more direct coordination of zoning administration, permitting, long range, and community planning between the City of Tulsa, INCOG and the TMAPC. These changes could also include consideration of the consolidation of some or all small area planning, long range planning, capital planning, economic development, community development, zoning administration and development permitting functions into a Community Development Department within the City of Tulsa. It is also important that the city continue to support regional transportation and land use planning, economic development and growth policy initiatives as well. The city should establish measurable goals based on the PLANiTULSA strategic plan, make sure the departments and agencies have adequate resources to accomplish them, and hold them accountable for performance.



For the plan to succeed, it is crucial that the process of development is clear, fair and easy to follow.



Organize planning and development functions so they work for common goals

## SUCCESSFUL PLANNING MEANS... PLANS

While a city such as Tulsa should be commended for being forward thinking and moving ahead so boldly, it can be confusing to understand the various pieces of the planning puzzle. Here are some definitions that will help:

### VISION

- Core values and guiding principles
- Describes conceptual vision for the future of Tulsa

### POLICY PLAN

- Policy framework for land use, economic development, transportation, housing, parks, and open space
- Adjusted every five to ten years

### STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- Action items for the city to pursue now
- Detailed plans for targeted areas and city-wide initiatives
- Adjusted every year

### MONITORING PROGRAM

- Establishes benchmarks and a program to assess whether the goals of the vision and the policy plan are being achieved
- Evaluated every year

## Next Steps and Plan Structure

PLANiTULSA sets the long-term ideas for how the city should look, feel and function, based on the expectations expressed by thousands of Tulsans during the last two years. The next phase is to develop the policies and implementation steps that will start moving the city toward that vision.

While the vision provides the long-term goals, a policy plan would provide a framework for accomplishing these goals. This plan would guide housing, economic development, transportation, land use, parks, and open space policies and decision-making processes. The comprehensive plan should remain viable for 20 years or more with updates every five to ten years to reflect changing conditions.

In addition to the long-term policy plan, the city will develop a short-term strategic implementation plan that narrows the focus by providing an outline of short-term actions to meet goals and benchmarks established by the vision. Included within the strategic implementation plan are detailed plans for specific areas that can be pursued in the upcoming year. However, the strategic implementation plan should be reviewed and updated annually. This review should take an inventory of current action items used to implement the plan, consider any changed city priorities, and outline successes and lessons learned from preceding activities.

Finally, the city will track its progress in achieving the vision with a monitoring program. A monitoring program uses citywide and local indicators, such as annual building permits issued, miles of trails completed, or number of homes within walking distance of transit, to measure implementation performance of a plan. These indicators will be published annually.



# The Future Is in Our Hands

The PLANiTULSA process illustrates our vision for Tulsa in the future. A consensus vision, based on input from thousands of participating Tulsans shows how the Tulsa of tomorrow will offer more choices and opportunities if we take action today.

Capturing our vision was the easy part—who doesn't like to think and dream about how the future should be? Making that dream a reality will require leadership, dedication, hard work, and above all, cooperation among people with different perspectives, opinions and expertise. Together, Tulsa can set things in motion—we can accomplish amazing results that will move our city toward a bright future.

Bob Smith



# Our Vision for Tulsa

Draft | Fall 2009



**PLANiTULSA**  
OUR PLAN. OUR FUTURE.

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